

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**



**Performance Oversight Hearing for the
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
For FY 2013 and FY 2014 to date**

Testimony of
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Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

Committee on Health
Yvette Alexander, Chairperson
Council of the District of Columbia

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Room 500
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Good afternoon Chairperson Alexander, members of the Committee, Committee staff and members of the community. My name is BB Otero and I am Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the performance of my office over the past year.

I am privileged to work with 10 of the most outstanding professional directors from health and human services agencies who, day in and day out, guide and manage a multitude of services for District residents. Our city is fortunate to have them.

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services was established three years ago, in February 2011. Our mission is to support “the Mayor in coordinating a comprehensive system of benefits, goods and services across multiple agencies to ensure children, youth, and adults, with and without disabilities, can lead healthy, meaningful and productive lives.” We achieve this mission along with the ten agencies, and one intermediary organization, under our purview:

1. Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)
2. Department of Disability Services (DDS)
3. Department of Health (DOH)
4. Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF)
5. Department of Human Services (DHS)
6. Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)
7. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)
8. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)
9. Office of Disability Rights (ODR)
10. DC Office on Aging (DCOA)
11. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (CYITC)

During our three years of existence, we have focused our work on two key themes:

- Cross-system integration to provide a more collaborative and coordinated approach to serving the residents of the city; and
- Establishing a culture of transparency and communication that seeks to make providers and community members partners in our work.

The value for this high level of coordination is evidenced in the testimonies of agency directors who repeatedly express the need to work with sister agencies in order to deliver more effective and efficient services and by the urging of the providers and the community who experience the frustrations of interacting with a disjointed system. It is at these intersections that my office adds the most value.

Working closely with agency leadership, we systematically identify programmatic areas that cut across agencies that may have previously operated in silos. By facilitating programmatic alignment, we achieve efficiencies, develop shared outcomes and make government more manageable for the recipients of such services.

We have worked with our cluster agencies on developing integrated case management systems, unifying case plans, promoting positive youth development through joint staff training, developing a common understating of trauma-informed practice, eliminating duplicated services, and reinvesting savings into a system of care.

My office has worked across clusters on joint efforts such as truancy prevention, early childhood development, preparing children to grow into successful adults, youth violence prevention, and affordable housing.

I'd like to take a few minutes to note examples of how, by working together in new and meaningful ways, we have made significant strides in outcomes for residents.

- The Nursing Home Transition Working Group brings several agencies together to understand the impediments to transitioning individuals out of nursing homes. As a result, we have redeployed and augmented DCOA staff who have, in the past 12 months, successfully transitioned 61 residents out of nursing homes back into the community.
- In partnership with Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice Paul Quander, Deputy Mayor for Education Abigail Smith, and the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation,

the One City Youth Initiative has led 28 District government agencies and more than 80 community-based organizations in working together to ensure quality programming, increase services in traditionally underserved neighborhoods, and coordinate data collection. The collaboration resulted in more than 19,000 children and youth participating in summer enrichment activities.

- Working with the DC Office on Aging, a number of city agencies, AARP, the New York Academy of Medicine, and the George Washington University, we have begun the development of a strategic plan which will lead to DC's designation as an Age-Friendly City by the World Health Organization. To date, thousands of stakeholders from across the District have weighed in through online and paper surveys, forums, and intimate "community consultations" to lay the groundwork to make DC an even friendlier place in which to live, work, play, and grow older.
- Last year, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) released the first ever consolidated affordable housing production RFP, which brought together the housing resources of various city agencies—including DOH, DHS, and DBH—in one solicitation. The 2013 RFP yielded a total of 975 affordable units.
- Through the work of the Truancy Task Force, we have vastly improved the collection and sharing of data which has led to better understanding of the reasons why some children and youth are not attending school. The data and analysis have led to improving practice by instituting strategies that address these underlying issues including increased transportation subsidy, augmenting family supports through CFSA and JGA, strengthening referrals to OAG, and enhancing supports at the schools. The Mayor's commitment to this effort is evidenced by the \$1 million in funding in my office that has allowed us to expand the Parent Adolescent Support Services (PASS) program.
- The successful merger of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration into the new Department of Behavioral Health is the direct result

not only of the hard work of staff but the early formation of an executive team across agencies that provided guidance and support to what is a difficult endeavor.

- Finally, community-based organizations that provide direct services help expand our capacity to reach District residents and serve as a conduit for information sharing between the community and the government. My office has worked to strengthen the quality of such partnerships, including our support of the senior transportation program overhaul, improvements made in the 211 system, and increased transparency of funding for children and youth via the Children's Budget Report.

In closing, I have to say that Mayor Gray has assembled one of the most outstanding nationally recognized team of leaders to advance his health and human services agenda and I am honored to be part of this team.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to share our progress with the Committee on Health, the DC Council, and the community. We are committed to achieving our mission and best serving the residents of the city. I look forward to your support as we continue to work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for children, youth, families and elders in the District of Columbia.

This concludes my written testimony. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.